

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

23 June 1983

MOSCOW, LEBANON, AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Summary

We believe that the Soviets will continue to bolster Syria's opposition to the Israeli-Lebanese withdrawal agreement. They will maintain a generous flow of military equipment; accompany this with political, propaganda, and logistics support; and exploit and exacerbate Lebanese tensions in an effort to demonstrate that the US-backed agreement cannot lead to peace. [redacted]

25X1

Moscow and Damascus may believe they would benefit from limited conflict confined to Lebanon--such as stepped-up artillery exchanges and Palestinian raids on Israeli positions--even though these could escalate into broader Israeli-Syrian conflict. The Soviets probably would prefer to avoid a wider conflict which almost certainly would result in Syria's defeat. Yet, they appear willing to accept the risk because the successful implementation of the withdrawal agreement would greatly enhance the prospects of President Reagan's plan for a Middle East peace settlement. Moscow may be counting on Washington's ability to restrain Israel, Tel Aviv's reluctance to

This paper was prepared by [redacted] the Foreign Policy Issues Branch, Policy Analysis Division, Office of Soviet Analysis. Comments and queries may be directed to the Chief, Policy Analysis Division, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted]
COPY NO. 9

25X1

SOV M 83-10113C

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

engage Soviet units in Syria, and Syrian President Assad's desire to avoid an all-out war. [redacted]

25X1

Moscow also is running the risk of being perceived as the spoiler in Lebanon by the moderate Arab camp. Its willingness to do so probably reflects its recognition that for all its efforts to co-opt the moderate Arabs' position on a peace settlement, its ties with the radical Arab states are the key to its influence in the Middle East. [redacted]

25X1

The Soviets may be prepared to offer alternative peace proposals--for example, UN-sponsored talks--in an effort to protect themselves against the possibility that Syria, for reasons of its own, might accept the US withdrawal plan. Should Syria decide to disengage from Lebanon and cooperate in the broader peace process, Moscow would have little choice but to acquiesce. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted]
25X1[redacted]
25X1

THE LEBANON WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

Moscow's View of Lebanon

1. Lebanon has become the testing ground for Moscow's reliability to its radical Arab clients and its ability to block US policy in the Middle East. The USSR's credibility was severely damaged by its ineffective response to the Israeli invasion of June 1982 and its subsequent exclusion from the pursuit of a solution. Syria, the key to Soviet presence and influence in the Middle East, has vital interests at stake in Lebanon, as do Moscow's Palestinian clients. The repeated Soviet condemnations of the introduction of US military forces to Beirut reflect Moscow's view that their presence demonstrates Washington's determination to assert its primacy in the region-- and to challenge Soviet interests in the Third World. [REDACTED]

25X1

2. Furthermore, the outcome of the US-backed Lebanese-Israeli agreement on withdrawal of foreign forces has assumed crucial significance for broader Middle East peace talks. Moscow presumably considers the initial agreement a setback. The US ability to "deliver" Israel on the issue of withdrawal has strengthened Washington's credibility, once again raised doubts about Soviet relevance to the negotiating process, and put the onus for obstructing an Israeli withdrawal on Moscow and Damascus. The Soviets probably are concerned that the accord will breed further negotiations and have a positive effect on the broader Reagan peace plan. [REDACTED]

25X1

Soviet Tactics

3. Moscow's principal means of affecting events in Lebanon has been to extend military aid to Syria. The deployment of Soviet-manned SA-5 and related air defense missile systems and the increased Soviet military presence have bolstered Syria's military posture vis-a-vis Israel and served as a tangible response to the US military presence in Lebanon. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

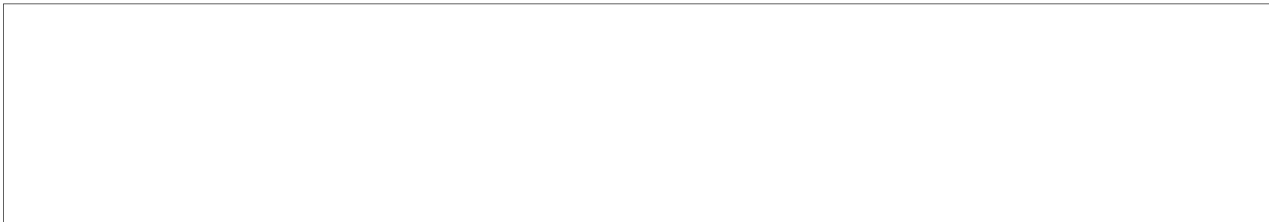
25X1

25X1

25X1

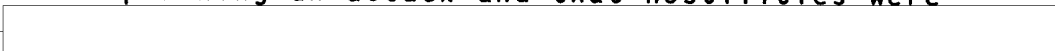


25X1



5. The Soviets also have tried to fan tensions in Lebanon to demonstrate that the US-backed withdrawal agreement cannot lead to peace. In the past four months, official Soviet government statements and media commentators have pushed the line that Israel was planning an attack and that hostilities were imminent.

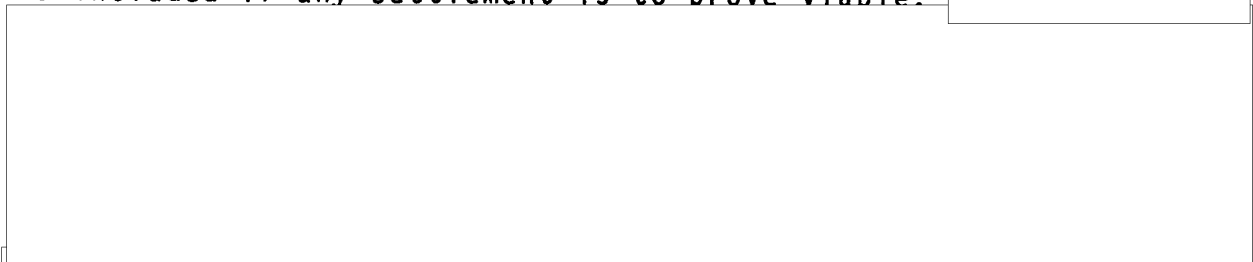
25X1



6. Both the Soviets and Syrians may believe they would benefit from limited conflict confined to Lebanon--such as stepped-up artillery exchanges and Palestinian raids on Israeli positions. Such a conflict would undermine the withdrawal agreement and force recognition of Moscow's claims that it must be included if any settlement is to prove viable.

25X1

25X1



Soviet Ambassador to Lebanon Soldatov, for example, left Moscow's commitment to support Syria in a war in Lebanon unclear in a press conference in May. And Soviet official statements have failed to pledge explicit support for Damascus in a broader conflict. Nonetheless, Syria's hope of Soviet backing could prompt it to take provocative action.

25X1

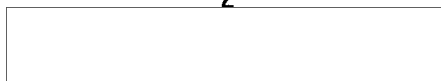
25X1

25X1

Military and Political Risks

7. Such a campaign clearly carries risks; it can produce an escalation of rhetoric and lead to incidents which produce

25X1



25X1

[redacted]

broader conflict (as in Soviet war scares prior to the June 1967 war). Confining military clashes to Lebanon would be very difficult, particularly in view of the two Soviet-manned SA-5 surface-to-air missile sites in Syria and the unpredictability of Israeli responses to their use. Should Israel attack Syrian positions in the Bekaa, for example, the Soviets would face strong Syrian pressure to fire on Israeli planes with SA-5s. The firing of the missiles probably would provoke an Israeli attack on the Soviet sites which in turn could spark a major conflict between Israel and Syria. Such a war almost certainly would lead to Syria's defeat, involve casualties by Soviet units, inflict a further setback to the reputation of Soviet arms, and once again demonstrate Moscow's inability to defend its clients from Israeli attack. To forestall these consequences, Moscow might consider dispatching additional military forces to Syria, thereby running the risk of a clash with Israel and confrontation with the US.

[redacted]

25X1

8. Although the Soviets may not share our assessment of the likelihood of Syria's defeat, we believe that they are impressed with Israel's military capabilities and unlikely to encourage Syria or the Palestinians to initiate or invite a major military conflict. At the same time, there is little indication that the Soviets are exercising a significant restraining influence on their clients. Moscow probably is willing to run the risk of conflict because of Syria's importance to it and because it sees the implementation of a US-arranged withdrawal agreement as a serious blow to its already weak position in the region. The Soviets may be betting on the US ability to restrain Israel, Israel's reluctance to engage Soviet units, and Assad's desire to avoid an all-out war.

[redacted]

25X1

9. Playing a spoiler's role in the peace process also entails political risks. Because of the recent Israeli-Lebanese agreement, the Soviets are again isolated with the extremist Arabs and, with Syria, may be perceived as the recalcitrant and destabilizing actors in the region. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia have expressed support for the withdrawal agreement, and even Iraq has offered low-key approval.

[redacted]

25X1

10. In response, the Soviets have made several gestures designed to project an image of responsibility. A Soviet embassy official in Amman told a US official on 15 May that the Soviets would not object to a Lebanese-Syrian agreement on withdrawal and that Moscow was urging restraint on the Syrians.

[redacted]

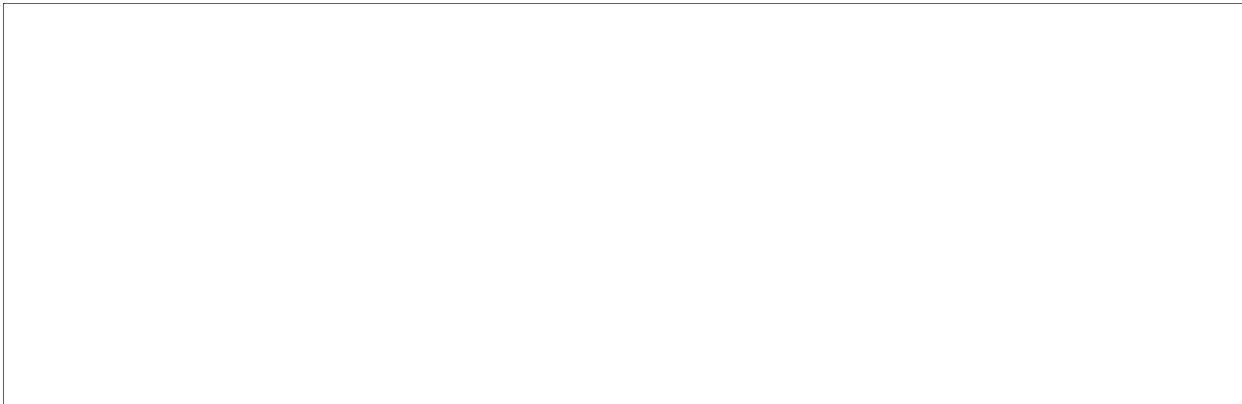
[redacted]

25X1

25X1

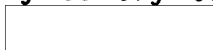
25X1

25X1




25X1


Prospective Soviet Moves

12. The Soviets almost certainly will try to bolster Syrian resistance to any efforts by the United States or the moderate Arab states to pull Damascus into the negotiating process. They will maintain a generous flow of military equipment and may organize and supervise further Syrian exercises (such as that held in late May) in an effort to enhance Syrian military proficiency, demonstrate their own support, and reinforce Syrian opposition to the agreement. Such activities will keep tensions in Lebanon high, but Moscow is unlikely to try to precipitate a major Syrian-Israeli military clash. 

25X1

13. Moscow is also likely to continue to cultivate leftists, Islamic nationalists, and radical Palestinians in Lebanon in order to encourage their opposition to the agreement as well as to prevent the US-supported government from consolidating its hold. This is likely to involve political, propaganda and financial support as well as the filtering of arms to them via Syria. These Soviet actions may well embolden such elements to undertake small scale military actions directed at Israeli and US personnel. 

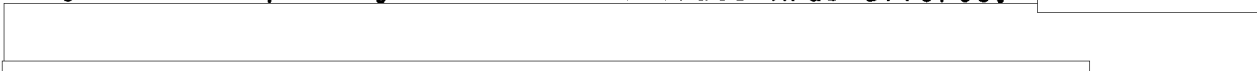
25X1

14. Moscow could offer alternate peace proposals designed to put it in a more positive position, derail the US-arranged agreement, and move withdrawal talks into a different forum. This would become a stronger possibility if Syria were to show signs of receptivity to US and moderate Arab efforts. 

25X1

25X1

25X1

 The Soviets could resurrect old approaches to Middle East talks--such as the Four Power approach of the late 1960s which followed the failure of the Jarring mission--in an effort to appeal to European and moderate Arab audiences. The current support given



25X1

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

the Lebanon agreement by most Arab nations makes it unlikely that any such initiatives would succeed in the foreseeable future, however. [redacted]

25X1

15. Should Syria show signs of cooperating in pursuing a withdrawal from Lebanon, Moscow might try to use its substantial leverage with Damascus to discourage such a course. The Soviets could threaten to withhold military assistance, advisers or spare parts--or even Soviet-controlled components from the Syrian air defense network. Such extreme actions would be a last resort, however, because Moscow would risk antagonizing Damascus, thereby undermining relations with its key ally in the Arab-Israeli context. [redacted]

25X1

16. We believe that Moscow could not prevent the Syrians from concluding an agreement with the US. As Egypt demonstrated in the early 1970s, once a nation has decided on the peace process, Soviet influence based on military aid decreases, particularly if US assistance is forthcoming. Thus, Moscow eventually would have to acquiesce, albeit reluctantly, to such a Syrian policy. [redacted]

25X1

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REAGAN PEACE PLAN

A Broader Middle East Peace

17. Should Syria be pulled into the negotiating process and should the US-arranged withdrawal plan in Lebanon be implemented, the broader Reagan peace initiative would be bolstered and Soviet efforts to play a leading role in peace negotiations undermined. Although Soviet interests in the Middle East have been served by conflict, Moscow has long sought participation in peace negotiations in order to avoid leaving the field to the US, to enhance its status, and to institutionalize its role in the region. [redacted]

25X1

18. Since 1979, Moscow has consistently called for an international conference to discuss a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East and has said that it must include all interested parties, including the PLO. [redacted]

25X1
25X1

[redacted] Moscow would prefer that the United Nations not be involved in negotiations because this would diminish its own role and include the Chinese. The Soviets have acknowledged in public, however, the UN's "useful" role in the peace process, presumably because Arab proposals typically call for UN involvement. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

19. Soviet officials have stressed that they must be involved from the opening stages of the negotiating process and not simply invited to sign a document already agreed to by other parties. They have indicated their willingness to be a guarantor of such an agreement and reportedly favor some permanent machinery to monitor it; their own participation in such monitoring would formalize their role in the region. [REDACTED]

25X1

20. In a September 1982 speech, Soviet President Brezhnev repackaged his long-standing proposals for a Middle East settlement* and incorporated some of the points made at the Fez summit meeting in September, thereby toughening the Soviet position;** the object presumably was to convince the moderate Arabs that the Soviet proposal, unlike that of the US, was compatible with their own and that Moscow should be included in the negotiating process. [REDACTED]

25X1

21. In seeking inclusion in the peace process, Moscow presumably does not want to appear obstructionist and would prefer to have the onus for the failure of talks fall on Israel and the US. The Soviets therefore are unlikely to urge their allies to take uncompromising positions. In fact, in the past, Moscow has demonstrated flexibility on both the structure of a peace conference and the substance of a settlement--and has encouraged its allies to alter their positions in order to move negotiations forward. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

*The basic Soviet position with respect to a settlement calls for:

- The withdrawal of Israeli forces from all territories occupied since 1967.
- The creation of a Palestinian state.
- The guaranteed security and sovereignty of all states in the region, including Israel. [REDACTED]

25X1

**Brezhnev declared that eastern Jerusalem must become part of a Palestinian state, Moscow's firmest position on that issue to date. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

22. Despite a posture toward a settlement which is broadly consistent with that of the moderate Arabs and appears to be positive, the Soviets historically have had little constructive to offer the peace process. They have no leverage with Israel, and both Israel and the United States oppose their participation in negotiations; and they have no capability to arrange peace talks on their own. While conveying the impression of flexibility on both procedural and substantive matters, they have in fact avoided getting out in front of their radical clients or exerting significant leverage in pushing for concessions. Because their major gains have resulted from tensions, the Soviets have no compelling reason to pay a price for real movement toward peace. [redacted]

25X1

23. Over the long term, the Soviets may well anticipate that if an international conference does convene, the prospects of its succeeding will remain highly questionable and its failure would work to Soviet advantage. They may reason that the United States could then be made to bear the principal onus for failing to deliver an Israel flexible enough to meet minimum Arab demands. And they may calculate that, in this case, US prestige throughout the Arab world would decline and that opportunities for an improvement in the Soviet position in the region would increase. [redacted]

25X1

24. In spite of Moscow's inability to move negotiations forward, various moderate Arabs have endorsed the Soviet proposals, and Jordan's King Husayn has restated his vague support for a future Soviet role in the peace process. While such gestures typically have intensified when the moderates are dissatisfied with US policy and wish to put pressure on Washington, the Arabs may well be impressed by Moscow's determination to block action to which it is not a party. [redacted]

25X1

25. Similarly, Egypt's apparent willingness to resume relations with the USSR at the ambassadorial level, Jordan's purchases of arms from the USSR, and Saudi Arabia's hints that it might consider relations with Moscow probably are largely designed to signal displeasure with US policies. But they may also reflect a perception that some accommodation to the USSR is necessary. The Soviets will seek to prevent differences over Lebanon from obstructing their ongoing efforts with the moderates who, for the most part, support the Lebanese-Israeli withdrawal agreement. [redacted]

25X1

26. In general, Moscow's ability to achieve its objectives in the Middle East will continue to be based less on its own

25X1

actions and capabilities than on the creativity of US diplomacy, Israeli actions, and Arab perceptions about the utility of military pressure versus the peace process. The USSR's key ally, Syria, remains the ultimate spoiler, but Moscow has no guarantee that Damascus will not change course. Moscow will continue seeking openings to exploit Arab disillusionment with lack of progress or with US inability to affect Israeli intransigence-- but cannot itself obstruct the peace process if the key players want to move forward.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: Moscow, Lebanon and the Peace Process

Distribution:

- 1 - DCI 7 D 60 Hq.
- 2 - DDCI 7 D 60 Hq.
- 3 - ED/DCI 7 D 6015 Hq.
- 4 - Exec. Registry 7 E 12 Hq.
- 5 - DDI 7 E 44 Hq.
- 6 - DDI Registry 7 E 47 Hq.
- 7 - DDI/SA 7 E 44 Hq.
- 8 - DDI/PES 7 F 24 Hq.
- 9-13 - OCPAS/IDCD/CB, 7 G 07 Hq.
- 14 - Chairman/NIC 7 E 62 Hq.
- 15 - NIO/USSR 7 E 62 Hq.
- 16 - NIO/SP 2 E 49 Hq.
- 17 - NIO/NESA 7-E-48 Hq.
- 18 - D/NESA - 6-G-02 Hq.
- 19 - C/NESA/IA/I 6-G-05 Hq.
- 20 - NESA/AI/L [redacted] 6-G-05 Hq.
- 21 - Chief DDO/SE, [redacted] 4D0119 HQ
- 22 - DDO, [redacted]
- 23 - D/SOVA [redacted]
- 24 - DD/SOVA [redacted]
- 25 - Chief, SOVA/CS [redacted]
- 26 - Chief, SOVA/DI [redacted]
- 27 - Chief, SOVA/EA [redacted]
- 28 - Chief, SOVA/SE [redacted]
- 29 - Chief, SOVA/SF [redacted]
- 30 - Chief, SOVA/TF [redacted]
- 31-32 - Chief, SOVA/PA [redacted]
- 33 - Chief, PA/D [redacted]
- 34 - Chief, PA/S [redacted]
- 35-36 - Chief, PA/F [redacted]
- 37-41 - PA/F [redacted]

SOVA/PA/F [redacted] (17 Jun)

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: Moscow, Lebanon and the Peace Process

Distribution:

- 42 Mr. Donald Gregg
NSC Staff Member/Intelligence
Room 381/EOB
- 43 Mr. Howard Teicher
Staff Member
NSC Staff
Room 351 EOB
- 44 Mr. Dennis Chapman
INR/IS
Department of State
Room 6510A NS
- 45 The Honorable Nicholas A. Veliotis
Assistant Secretary of State for
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Department of State
Room 6242 NS
- 46 Mr. Morris Draper
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Room 6244 NS
- 47 The Honorable Philip Habib
Ambassador at Large
Department of State
Room 6313 State
- 48 Mr. Hugh Montgomery
Director/INR - Room 6531 NS
Department of State
- 49 Mr. Robert Baraz
Director, Office of Analysis for the Soviet Union
and Eastern Europe
Room 4758 INR/SEE, Department of State
- 50 Mr. Richard Burt
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European Affairs
Rm 6226 NS, Department of State
- 51 Mr. Richard Combs
Office of Soviet Affairs
Bureau of European Affairs
Room 4217 EUR/SOV, Department of State

25X1

25X1

25X1

- 52 Mr. Thomas Simons
Director, Office of Soviet Union Affairs
Room 4217, Department of State
- 53 Ms. Isabel G. Kulski
INR/SEE/FP
Department of State
Room 4843 NS
- 54 Mr. George S. Harris
Director, Office of Analysis for
NESA/INR
Department of State
Room 4524A NS
- 55 The Honorable Richard Perle
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Policy)
Room 4E838, Pentagon
- 56 COL John R. Stanford
Executive Secretary, OSD
Department of Defense
Room 3-A-948 The Pentagon
- 57 Mr. Fred C. Ikle
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Department of Defense
Room 4-E-830, The Pentagon
- 58 General Richard G. Stilwell, USA (Ret)
Deputy Under Secretary for Policy
Department of Defense
Room 2-E-812 The Pentagon
- 59 Mr. Richard L. Armitage
Assistant Secretary of Defense
International Security Affairs
Room 4-E-817 The Pentagon
- 60 Mr. David Ransome
ISA/Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Department of Defense
Room 4-D-765 The Pentagon
- 61 Mr. Ronald Stivers
Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Policy
Department of Defense
Room 2-E-812, The Pentagon

25X1

25X1

- 62 Ms. Wynfred Joshua
DIO European and Soviet Political Affairs
Defense Intelligence Agency
Room 2-C-238, The Pentagon
- 63 Vice Admiral Arthur S. Moreau, Jr., USN
Assistant to the Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff
Room 2-E-872 The Pentagon
- 64 MGEN William Odom
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
HQDA (DAMI-ZA)
Department of the Army
Room 2-E-464 The Pentagon
- 65 RADM John L. Butts, USN
Director of Naval Intelligence, NOP
Department of the Navy
Room 5-C-600 The Pentagon
- 66 BGEN G. H. Leach, USMC
Director of Intelligence
Department of the Navy
Room 2117, Navy Annex
- 67 MGEN John B. Marks, USAF
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Department of the Air Force
Room 4-A-932, The Pentagon
- 68 The Director
V12/SAO
National Security Agency
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755